THOMAS COUNTY CAT.

JOSEPH A. GILL, Editor.

COLBY - - - - - - KANSAS

AT FORTY-FIVE.

"Halt!" cry the bugles, down the column's length,
And nothing loth to halt and rest am I,
For summer's heat had somewhat taxed my strength,
And long the dusty ways before me lie.

The dew that glittered when the echoing horn
Called reveille to greet the waking day;
The cool sweet shadow of the cheery morn,
The birds that thrilled the bugles' roundelay;

The scented violets, with eyes of blue,
That breathed sweet incense when we trod them down;
The wild wood buds and blooms of brightest hue,
Fair prophecy of honor's radiant crown;

And all that made the earlier marching light,
Have passed like incense of the rosy hours,
And many a beaten field of fiercest fight
Lies between noonday and auroral flowers.

For all its promise, morning brought us care,
So soon its songs and pleasant shadows passed;
Our ambushed foes lurked in each woodland fair;
On every smiling plain we saw them massed.

Our standards gay, war's bright, heraldic page—
Our uniforms, with gold and silver drest,
Are rent and torn in battle's furious rage,
Blood-stained and marred with dust each glittering crest.

The light, young hearts that made a jest of life,
And laughed at death when we broke camp at dawn—
Changed are their merry songs for shouts of strife,
Or hushed where valor mourns a comrade gone.

And loitering here awhile, at "rest at ease,"
I note the shadows falling to the east;
Behind me, plume crowned, looms the hill, whose trees
Promised us glory, wealth, and love and peace.

Beckoned us on when morning time was bright
To certainty of victory and rest;
And now—'tis afternoon; 'twill soon be night;
And I have passed the green hill's waving crest.

"Forward!" the bugles call; ready am I;
For though my step hath lost its springing gait,
I am more prompt to march; quick to obey;
Less apt to question or to hesitate.

Yet, when some belted trooper gallops by
I lift my eyes, warned by the swift hoofs' tramp,
And hail him with the infantryman's cry:
"Ho, comrade, tell me how far is't to camp?"

—Robert J. Burdette, in Brooklyn Eagle.

AUNT BECKY'S REMEDY.

A Case in Which It Proved an Effectual Cure.

"Henry, Rue does not seem at all well. She has been growing pale and hollow-eyed for some time; and now she does nothing but mope about and read and sigh. I don't understand it."

"I had not noticed it, Ellen. Perhaps she reads too much, I see she is a perfect book-worm. It rather runs in my side of the family to be literary and I have thought Rue was inclined that way, too."

"I can't imagine what ails her. She seems low-spirited and unhappy, and she surely has no reason to be so."

"Of course she hasn't, Ellen. What an idea—a girl not yet sixteen unhappy! It must be her blood is out of order. Spring is here and she needs some sort of toning up. Let Dr. Miles fix up some sort of tonic for her."

"I've been thinking that perhaps a change of air would do her good. What do you say to sending her out in the country to Becky's? The fresh country air must surely help her; and I am really too busy with all my household cares to care for her properly."

"That is just the thing, Ellen. Why didn't you think of it before? Becky will be in her element to have one to coddle. She used to dose me the whole time when I was small, and she cured me quicker than a doctor could, too. Send her to her at once."

This was the conversation I overheard between my father and mother as I lay upon the sofa in the parlor.

I was delighted. But it was not so much at the prospect of going to Aunt Becky's as I was at the fact that the family seemed at last to be convinced of my declining health. For nearly a year I had been suffering from what I felt to be a neglect to comprehend the workings of my finer nature, mental and physical, and I had been growing most delightfully miserable. I was a great reader, as my father said; and the class of books I enjoyed most was that of romance—wherein the heroines were pale, and sad-eyed, sickly and interesting, full of trouble and woe, and who pined away from various causes, such as unrequited affection, an unsympathetic world, and a general misunderstanding of their inner longings by those who surrounded them.

I doted upon poetry, and the more dismal and soul-harrowing and obscure the more I doted upon it. I was particularly fond of those passages which referred in vague terms to early death, though I could not have explained what there was about them that gave me so much pleasurable pain. I only knew, as I have said, that I was delightfully miserable. I had tried to be as much like my heroines as possible. A copious supply of chalk, cloves and slate pencils, in which I indulged my appetite secretly, had aided me in it so far as to cause me to grow quite pallid. My features were near enough to the regulation type not to be a source of anxiety to me; and hair and eyes being black as the "raven's wing" and a "sloe," individually, I considered it unnecessary to attempt any improvement on nature in the former, while the latter I simply pencilled about the eyebrows in order to make them more lustrous. As a consequence my countenance at this time was quite striking. So it pleased me much to see that I had attracted attention to my decline.

The next few days were occupied in preparations for my departure to Aunt Becky's. The suddenly awakened family solicitude at my condition was evinced by indulgence in all the luxuries—fruits and other delicacies—which could be procured, while younger children were repeatedly told to "wait on sister Rue while she is here;" and the ambiguity of this command was as gratifying as the constant attendance which all danced upon me for those few days.

"She can hardly last through another winter," one caller said to another in a guarded whisper, thinking me asleep in the hammock outside the window.

She need not have guarded the remark at all, for it would not have troubled me in the least. I was lying meditating upon the affinity of souls and my lack in finding one in this world to respond to my own; and such a thing as not lasting through another winter was perfectly in accord with my pleasant thoughts just then.

Not that I was so miserable that I wanted to die, but that it was part of my programme to die young. Did not all my favorite Arabellas and Ethelindas do so, or came so very near it that it amounted to the same thing as far as sentiment was concerned? And as for reality I thought very little about it. Death in the abstract was what held fascination for me.

So in this frame of mind I started for Aunt Becky's, accompanied by my father, who, as he placed me in her care at the country station—for he had to return immediately to the city—said to her in an undertone:

"Becky, do all you can for her. Cure her, if possible; but humor her, as she seems not long for this world."

She gave a sharp glance as she seated me in the low basket phaeton and gathered up the pony's reins; and she kept up her swift glances as we rode out to the farm, varying them by occasional terse questions.

"Been sick long, Rue?"

"For nearly a year," I languidly replied.

"What's the matter?"

"I don't know."

"Have aches and pains or cough?"

"No—that is, not much." I had forgotten that a cough was usual in cases of decline, and forthwith proceeded to give a little one—a very unnatural one I felt it to be at the time.

Another sharp look.

"That ain't any consumption cough! Well, how do you feel, any way?"

"O, Aunt Becky, just as if it would be perfectly heavenly to lie right down and die."

My far-away look as I contemplated the blue sky was intended to settle forever the question as to my condition; and it seemed to, though not in just the way I had expected.

"Pish!" was her contemptuous ejaculation. "Die! Well, you ain't going to just yet—not from any thing you've got now."

I had no chance to reply to this unfeeling remark, as we had reached the farm.

For several days I wandered idly around, swinging in the hammock I had brought with me, arrayed in clinging white wrappers and slippers. When the weather permitted I took my naps out of doors in the most approved attitudes—a book of poems clasped in one hand, one arm thrown gracefully above my head while the other hung limp by my side, and one slippered foot peeped from beneath my skirt over the hammock's edge. I felt that my affinity might possibly hover near me unawares and it behooved me to keep my lamps always trimmed and burning; for even if I could not live, we must at least recognize each other—and how could that be if I did not live, while I lived, up to my ideal?

But a few days after my arrival, ready for my day-dreams, I missed my favorite poems; in fact novels as well were gone.

"Where are my books, Aunt Becky?" I asked, as she was about to drive to the village.

"I've put them away. The doctor says you mustn't read much," she answered as she drove off.

I had not heard of that edict before; but I knew some poetry by heart and that would do as well; so I lay thinking—my breast swelling with emotion as I made myself the heroine of a most romantic tale passing through my brain. My eyes were wet with tears and I was sobbing with the excess of emotional excitement to which pitch I had worked myself when she returned.

"What are you crying about, Rue?" she brusquely exclaimed.

"O, nothing! only—" I paused undecided how to express myself.

"Only what? Homesick?"

"No, indeed, Aunt Becky! but you can't understand me. It is delightful to cry sometimes. I do love when I am alone to lie and think and—feel—that's all."

"Fiddlesticks! Well, I got something to-day for you to take that'll make you *feel*—better," was all she said.

That night she came to my room.

"Two of the slats are out of my bedstead, Rue; I guess I'll have to sleep with you," she announced, tying on her nightcap as she spoke.

"What's these?"

She had opened one of the bureau drawers in an ostensible endeavor to close it properly.

"Only some soft slate-pencils I have with me," I answered, faintly.

"Well, now, child, I'm going to take them every one. I ain't going to have you figgerin' one bit while you are here," she shrewdly remarked as she confiscated my whole stock upon the spot.

"Cloves, too. Why, Rue, your ma must've sent these to me. Enough to last a housekeeper a year, and I want some in my pickles to-morrow! I'll take them right out, because you don't want your clothes scented up by them—sweet clover's best for that."

I could not say a word; but I wondered how I should keep up my pallor without those condiments to nibble. Then, too, how was I to enjoy my sentimental soliloquies which often kept me awake far into the night and left me so interestingly wan-eyed in the morning? I should have to forego this sorrowful happiness, or happy sorrowfulness, with which my romantic imaginings filled my solitary hours, if Aunt Becky was to share my privacy.

But she did not seem to dream that she might be intruding. She chatted on in her cheerful, quaint strain until I found myself laughing in spite of me. She kept it up, too, far into the night until I dropped asleep—too utterly exhausted to answer her frequent question: "Gone to sleep, Rue?"

It was five o'clock when I was awakened next morning.

"Rue! Rue! It's time to get up. Here is a dress and a pair of shoes I want you to put on and come right out with me."

She would not let me lie a minute longer, and I had to obey; so I slipped on the gingham dress, which was a surprisingly good fit, and the thick-soled shoes, and followed her out into the garden.

"Now, Rue, there is any amount of work to be done 'mong the flower-beds, and I've got to take mornings to do it in mostly, and I must have your help. I got these yesterday just for you to work with. They ain't heavy, and we'd better get right to work for a pansy bed first thing. I've got seed enough for a big one, and they are beauties, too. You dote on pansies, you know."

She had opened a neat box of light garden tools as she talked and now handed me a rake. I did dote on pansies, and urged on by her example and cheery talk I raked away in the mellow earth until breakfast time and went in absolutely hungry.

Day after day she kept up this course. She gave me hardly a minute alone and she had me read aloud to her when I wanted a book.

"I haven't time and you mustn't read much, the doctor says; so we'll have to carry it out together;" and she produced "Huckleberry Finn," which she alternated with "Rudder Grange," so that between the remarkable humorous adventures in the former and Pomona's performance in the latter I had no time to think of love or sentiment except in the most ludicrous light. Then the flower-beds needed so much hoeing and scratching and weeding, and the old pansy bed opened up in such marvelous beauty that I began to be quite worried for fear the new one would not rival it, so renewed hoeing and weeding had to be kept up. I had to keep on my thick shoes, for it was supposed that the dog had carried off one of my slippers, and my hammock came to grief and uselessness by the calf's chewing a big hole in it; so that really I was obliged to do nothing but work out in the garden day after day—and how my flowers grew!

My pansies outrivaled the old ones, and I forgot every thing, even my affinity, in the delight of watching for the new faces which peered up at me from the velvety blossoms, and I was too tired when night came to moon over myself, much less any Arabella or Ethelinda, so sound sleep visited me quickly.

About the time I reached this state and could outrival Aunt Becky in dressing and reaching the flower garden in the morning, she found time to fix up her own bedstead and leave me to my privacy again.

It was late in the fall when she said to me one day:

"Well, Rue, do you think you'll last through the winter?"

"Last! Why, Aunt Becky, I wouldn't do any thing else for the world!" was my convincing answer, for it actually struck a pang to my heart to think of dying.

"Well, I guess your folks want to see you home by this time;" and home I went, Aunt Becky with me.

They were all ready to receive me—with pillows in the carriage and tender, sorrowing faces; she had done all the corresponding, as I did not like to write letters, and had done it as she pleased. So, when I rushed in upon the family with my red cheeks and face as brown as a gypsy's, they could not have been more astonished if I had risen from the dead.

"I said you could cure her if anybody could!" father exclaimed, in delight, that night.

"But what did you give her, Becky?" my mother anxiously asked.

"Tools!" was her sententious answer.

"What!"

"Tools—rake and hoe and spade and trowel!—gingham dress and thick-soled shoes;—took away the cloves and pencils she was eating till she looked like a tallow candle;—hid her love-sick stories and death-wishing-for poetry and gave her something to laugh at instead—let the calves eat up her lazy hammock and broke down my old bedstead so't she couldn't be alone a minute to cry and take on over her sentimental fol-de-rol;—turned her right out into the open air and let the sky and the breeze and the flowers help me out in it."

"Was that all, Becky?" Mother was so surprised that she could not find any thing else to say.

"Wasn't that enough, as long as it cured her?"

"And do you mean to say that she was not going into a decline at all?" mother urged.

"Yes, and no. She hadn't any disease that's down in the books, though I don't know what eating that stuff would have done in time. But she was declining fast into a foolish, sentimental, romantic simpleton, with all her ideas of love and heroines and affinities and death, and she might have declined by this time into something worse, for she was fast getting where she could have been most easily led into something she would have had cause to regret perhaps all her days. Queer, that mothers can't see such things!"

"Why, Becky, how you talk! I had never thought of that!" Mother was horrified as well as alarmed.

"Yes, that's just it. You were too busy with your household affairs and, like most women, thought if any thing ailed your girl it must be something for the family doctor to prescribe for; so she was drifting right on down to ruin, like enough, unless her own hard sense got the better of her in time—all just because you didn't try to understand her. But Rue's cured, I'm pretty sure; now see you don't let Bess get on the same decline, that's all."

And Bess did not. Mother was awakened in time as well as I. I did not lapse into another decline; and mother saw to it that the other girls were safely guarded by her enlightened eye through the dangerous romantic period for which she found Aunt Becky's to be an infallible cure.—Sarah B. Scarborough, in Ladies' Home Journal.

AN ENTERPRISING GIRL.

She Goes to Europe on the Fruits of a Little China Painting Kiln.

There is a bright young woman now crossing the ocean on a Cunarder who is having lots of fun out of a voyage she has fairly earned. A year ago, when the Paris Exposition first began to be talked of here, she suggested to her father the propriety of letting her go over this summer with a party of friends to see the exposition and improve her French in Paris. Her father, with a masculine blindness to golden opportunities, declined on the threadbare plea that he couldn't afford it.

"Very well," said his daughter with unexpected amiability. "Will you give me the money I usually spend for a summer trip toward it if I earn the rest myself?"

"Yes, I'll do that," said her father, readily.

"Will you give it to me now?" asked the daughter. Her father looked a little suspicious. Finally he replied:

"Yes, I'll give it to you now, if you'll promise not to spend it and strike me for a fresh supply next summer."

The bargain was made, and the long-headed young woman took the check and went calmly on with her plans for multiplying it, closely though secretly watched by her somewhat skeptical parent.

Like most other girls, she had her share of feminine accomplishments. She sang a little, embroidered a little, carved wood a little. But, unlike most other girls, she did one thing well, and that was to paint china. She had studied the art very carefully, and turned out many unique and artistic Christmas and wedding presents for her friends. But she was often disappointed in her most carefully executed work by some blunder in the firing, and so, she knew, were many of her friends who painted less skillfully than she. How to remedy this had long been a problem with her, and for some time she had cherished a scheme of having a furnace and doing her own firing, and perhaps her friends, too, for friendship's sake.

This scheme she now proceeded to carry out, risking in it the capital her father had advanced. But she had confidence enough in her own mechanical and business capabilities not to feel that it was a very great risk. She employed a reliable dealer, who built for her a compact and convenient little kiln in the cellar of her father's brown stone front. She experimented thoroughly with her own work before she took any other. When she found she could trust her own skill she let her friends know that she would fire their china for them at the same rates she had formerly paid herself. It was not long before she had patrons. The girls she knew came at first because it was so easy to run over to her house with a frail bit of porcelain and not run the risk of sending it. She did each piece as if it were her own, carefully and lovingly, knowing from experience the startling changes produced on the delicate coloring by a degree too much of heat.

Her friends brought their friends. Soon she could wait to light the furnace till she had enough china for a day's work. She made from five to ten dollars every day that she worked. She paid the expenses of running the furnace, and when she was ready to start for Europe had money enough for all her expenses, including a new Paris gown and an extra check of one hundred dollars besides from her proud father, who talks of taking her into his business when she comes back.—N. Y. Star.

FARMING AS AN ART.

The Study of Agricultural Science in the United States.

Farming, as an art, is as old as civilization—when, after recognizing the food value of a single plant, a man first tried to promote its growth and increase, he found the task attended with difficulties; and in surmounting those difficulties he acquired some of the elements of the art of agriculture. In this art many ancient people became very proficient. Considered from this point of view, it is probable that ancient agriculture reached as high a development as the best among modern nations. We have types of this to-day in the agriculture of China, Japan, India and Egypt. Neither mechanic arts nor science have contributed, except in a trifling degree, to its progress. It began as a manual art simply, and so it remained, practically unchanged, until the opening of the modern era. In every country, and in each district of all large countries, rules were gradually worked out which were found to serve in practice; and these were handed down from generation to generation. Intermingled with them were many superstitions—unfounded beliefs in regard to the action of certain supposed or real forces, natural or supernatural, upon the growth of crops. But it is a singular fact that the part played by these superstitions was but slightly, if at all, unfavorable in their effect upon results. They often made the work difficult and tedious; but men in all ages have had such an eye to the main chance that superstitious notions, while they might and did cause the expenditure of much needless work, were not of sufficient force to greatly lessen results. They did as much good, probably, in restraining waste of effort in vague experiment as they did harm by inducing needless operations. Numbers of old agricultural maxims, superstitions as they now seem, were really well based, and embodied the observation of many in a pithy saying that endured because it was in a way true. Slowly a body of facts were collected and transmitted that enabled well-trained farmers to so regulate their operations as to achieve success. As yet our modern science has done more in recognizing and explaining ancient rules and placing them upon intelligible bases, than in discovering valuable additions to them. It is only just now that the systematic collection and comparison of well-observed and skillfully-recorded facts have begun to lay the foundations of a new agriculture in which a sound reason for doing a needed thing will supersede a grotesque or fanciful one.

When the activity of European effort was transferred across the Atlantic to America, new conditions were encountered that have not yet been rightly understood or surmounted. The eastern parts of North America much more resemble Eastern Asia than Western Europe. The consequences have been unfavorable to our agriculture. The maxims of European agricultural art did not fit American conditions, and the result has been that the wisdom of the ancients has seemed like folly among us. Setting aside the slight and slowly-acquired knowledge of scant two centuries, under these strange conditions, it may be said that, as compared with the older nations, American farmers hardly possess any true art of agriculture. The European dogmas misled us, and we have worked out very few sound ones to replace them. This is both an injury and a benefit. It harms us to have no good empirical rules transmitted from father to son; but it benefits us to be entirely free from obstructive beliefs, which very slowly admit the clear light of demonstrative science.

The shifting character of our population, in its efforts to overspread and occupy a vast virgin continent, acts continually to hinder the foundation of agricultural art. Our bountiful soil prevents our blunders from doing us the injury that otherwise might end in destructive and fatal loss; yet in the settlement of many new States the settlers have crept very close to the verge of starvation, for want of an acquired agriculture adapted to their special conditions. Situated as we thus find ourselves, American farmers stand, in default of art, deeply in need of science, not only of general scientific knowledge, but of highly specialized knowledge, as made needful by local conditions. What will do in Dakota will not do at all in North Carolina. What is right in Florida is exactly wrong in Oregon. The essentials of Iowa are pernicious errors in Maine. Now, mankind seems, under some ill-recognized influence, to have always builded more wisely than it knew; and have we not done so here in America in the foundation of agricultural colleges and experiment stations in every State and Territory of our Union? The plan has been much divided, and as a fact it has been yet but poorly carried out. But having no art, do we not here in America, stand in special need of a Science of Agriculture, and having the beginnings of these institutions, will not our needs, now being so rapidly realized, force their development and drive us on to insure their success?"—Rural New Yorker.

—Apple Jam: To every pound of fruit, weighed after it is pared and sliced, allow three-quarters of a pound of sugar, and the grated rind of half a lemon. Put the apples into a jar and set this into a pan of boiling water. Let the apples stew until quite tender, then put them into a porcelain kettle with the sugar and lemon juice. Stir until soft, and let it simmer for at least half an hour.

HOME, FARM AND GARDEN.

—Well cured timothy hay will shrink after it is put in stack or mow an average of 215 pounds per ton.

—Paint made with turpentine is a better protector for iron work that it is when mixed with flaxseed oil.

—Potatoes at no time should be allowed to lie exposed to the sun. If they must be cured, this should be done in the shade, or the quality will be impaired.

—Egg plants are great feeders, and like a frequent dose of liquid manure. As the fruit gets large place under it a wisp of straw or hay to keep it from the ground.

—Lilies need mulching to keep the roots cool and moist, which in a few years will triple their flowers. The common white lily should be planted in July and August, while the buds are dormant. Dahlias succeed best in a heavy, cool and moist soil.

—Wet and low places may often be converted into fertile meadows. Draining and cutting and burning the natural growth must, in most cases, precede the breaking up. Such places will sometimes be found to be unsuspected storehouses of muck, which may be drawn out and allowed to dry, and finally go to the stable, barnyard, etc.

—Frosted Custard.—Take one quart of new milk, four eggs, one cup of sugar and one teaspoonful of lemon extract. Heat the milk boiling hot, beat the eggs and sugar together, pour the boiling milk over them, return to the fire, and let come to a boil. Let get very cold. Pile on top of the custard grated cocoanut and powdered sugar. Serve for dinner with cake.—The Housewife.

—To cure animal skins before the hair is dyed, scrape the flesh-side clean, and, while they are moist—but not wet—rub in liberally a mixture of alum and salt, about one-half of each. Roll up, hair-side out, for from two to four days; then shake out and give another application, but with less salt. In from two to four days more, according to the size of the skin, shake and beat out clean, and soften the skin by working it well over.

—Corn Soup.—This is one of the nicest of soups, and may be made of either green or canned corn. If the corn is green grate it, and add milk until it is of the proper consistency. Stir it almost constantly until it boils, then add a cupful of butter to two quarts of soup, pepper and salt to taste, and a few cracker crumbs. Let it boil five minutes and serve. Canned corn is first put through the colander, then cooked in the same way.—The Housekeeper.

—Trapping is a good remedy for squash-bugs. Place some rubbish or pieces of shingle, etc., around the hills, hunt for and gather the bugs under them early in the morning and kill them. Pieces of corn-cob soaked in coal tar and placed around the hills will, in a measure, repel the foe. Covering the running vines at the lower joints with fresh soil to induce them to form roots at these points is one of the safest means of preventing serious injury from insect attacks, and especially effective against insects working at the root.

COWS AND CALVES.

No One Need Milk an Unprofitable Animal More Than One Season.

I speak from many years' experience in raising cows when I recommend that they be bred to come in at two years old. It is barely possible that the animal may not attain quite as great a weight at maturity as if bred to come in at three years old, but even this I am inclined to doubt, for I believe it simply makes them a little longer in getting their growth; but even if the size should be reduced a little what does it matter? Bigness is not what we want in a cow, but a developing of the milk and butter qualities, and it is wise to begin this early. A good heifer that comes in at two years old has more than half paid the cost of raising at three, while the animal kept till then without a calf has cost double. Another reason for breeding young is that you may test the cow early and if you find she has a bad disposition, or milks hard, or that her milk is of a poor quality, you may turn her into beef and get rid of her a year sooner. Cows are so easily raised, or cheap to buy, that no one should milk a bad-dispositioned or unprofitable cow more than one season.

Heifers that are to be mothers at two years old should be fed liberally and cared for so that they will be well developed, and Holsteins ought to weigh nine hundred or one thousand pounds at that age, and will if fed and sheltered as they should be. Corn should form but a small part of the ration, for we wish to develop bone and muscle rather than fat. I always raise the calves by hand, rather than let them suck, not only because it is cheaper, but because the calf fed by hand is made gentle by it and will be less likely to give trouble in breaking to milk. The cost of raising a calf to two years old will vary with the price of grain and hay, and in different localities, but is, I believe, less than most farmers estimate. Some years ago my family physician had a Jersey cow drop a very promising heifer calf, which he raised, keeping exact account. He charged $8, if I recollect, for keeping the calf until four months old, when he sent it to pasture. From this date until she dropped a calf at two years old he kept an account of every cent of expense, charging the bull service, as well as the cost of keeping, and she cost him $31.25.—Waldo F. Brown, in N. Y. Tribune.